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October 10, 2013

Mr. Pete Rouse
Counselor to the President
White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Rouse:

I write regarding the recent reports that the Administration will allow states to use their own funds and their own personnel to reopen selected national parks that have been closed due to the government shutdown. I welcome this news, and urge you to expedite implementation of this policy in Colorado so that Trail Ridge Road, the main artery running through Rocky Mountain National Park, can open immediately.

As you know, this road has been closed since the government shutdown began on October 1st. The road is an important access route into the town of Estes Park, which was devastated by the recent flooding. With the road closed, and with other highways leading into Estes Park blocked due to the floods, Estes Park residents and tourists currently only have one usable highway running in and out of the city. Were that route to close for any reason, the town could be essentially cut off from the rest of the state.

I wrote yesterday to you, urging that the Trail Ridge Road reopen as swiftly as possible. Estes Park is in the midst of a massive recovery and rebuilding effort following the historic Colorado floods last month. By opening the road, the Administration can make a crucial second access point available to Estes Park residents. This action would also provide an important economic boost to a community still grappling with the effects of both the flooding and the shutdown.

Given the historically destructive floods that consumed thousands of homes and destroyed millions of dollars of public infrastructure across the Colorado Front Range earlier this month, this should qualify as an emergency situation that warrants an exemption. We ask that the Administration move swiftly to give our state the ability to reopen the Trail Ridge Road.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator